5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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their continued reliance upon his political power and intercession with his noble ancestors, in order that the village may enjoy peace through the coming months of the dry season and early rains at the beginning of the next economic cycle.

With this observance all of the sources of power—both social and supernatural—upon which the Mossis' well-being is dependent have been thanked for their support throughout the year just ended and have been encouraged, by the generosity of their supplicants, to continue their benevolence for the year to come. The Mossi understand the nature of these forces and the manner in which they can be controlled. They know them as manifestations of a deity who will reward their observance of ceremonial obligations with the soft winds and heavy rains that bring a rich harvest. The individual is intellectually and emotionally absorbed in maintaining a balance in his relationship to a world he understands. His efforts to maintain this balance are occasionally frustrated by sorcery or the contrary will of his deity, but he enjoys, nonetheless, a very real security.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS AT THE NIGER IRRIGATION PROJECT

Given the nature of these interrelationships between the organization of economic activity and the social and religious institutions of their culture, the adjustment of the Mossi who have been resettled at the Niger Irrigation Project has implications which go beyond mere technological adaptation. The settlers must, in fact, adjust to a totally changed cultural setting.

Arriving at the Niger project, they fail to find the institutions upon which they have always depended for their security; they find instead a natural environment governed by forces they do not know. Their water supply is no longer dependent on the supernatural controls of the earth custodians but comes from a dam built by Europeans. They are socially isolated from their kinsmen and their ancestral spirits in the Yatenga, and they derive little comfort from the presence of fellow Mossi with whom they have neither consanguineal nor affinal relationship.

Settlers were forcibly recruited for the Niger Irrigation Project until 1944, when forced labor was abolished throughout the French Union. Now a recruitment program brings Mossi families to the project each year; every family head receives a house, oxen, a plow, and a plot of land proportionate to the number of active workers accompanying him. Under the supervision of European agronomists, they apply modern methods to the production of rice and cotton. The project administration buys their crop for cash after deducting fees for seed, irrigation, mechanized cultivation, transportation, and processing. In theory, ten years of

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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how important is the conversion of the chiefs, or, at least, their sympathy for our religion, in the spread of Catholicism." The missionaries may have been successful in the village of the Manga district chief because he was sympathetic to them, but they made few converts in the villages far from the district center or in the neighboring districts. In the Béré district, a few miles from Manga, the Catholics have made only 22 converts despite more than 15 years' work. In Manga, however, they were able to "recruit" most of the young children for their church and school. When an old man was asked why his children became Catholic, he tried to evade the question but finally replied that he did not control the minds of his children. Knowing the nature of administrative practice in the upper Volta before 1946, and the nature of Mossi family structure, we looked further for the answer.

Paradoxically, it comes from a Catholic missionary, André Dupont, who, seeking to discover the reason for the decrease of patients in the Catholic-controlled maternity clinics, asked:

> Why have the maternity clinics which in 1942 served more than seventy mothers a month now serve only two or three? "We are no longer forced to go," reply the villagers. Was it the fear of sanction which accounted for the unanimous use of the clinics? Alas! It would seem to be so. The use of force and sanction have rendered odious an institution of charity. It would have been better if the mothers were only encouraged to use the clinics. "These natives do not understand," I am told sometimes. But how does one expect them to understand? (Dupont 1949:4)

Fear was certainly one of the reasons why the people in Manga embraced Catholicism. Before 1946 (the Brazzaville conference in 1944 abolished forced labor), men and women were recruited for work on the roads and on Ivory Coast plantations, and children were recruited for the schools. The district chiefs often gathered orphans and the children of their former serfs and sent them to the mission to fill the quotas, but many children and whole families voluntarily attached themselves to the missions. The reasons for so doing are legion, but in some cases it was simply the desire to accept the new religious faith.

Once at the mission the children were taught French and the tenets of Catholicism. Many of the boys later became catechists or priests and several girls went into the nunnery. However, the largest group of educated youths became the clerical personnel of the administration and were lost to missionary activity. Because the administration lacked French-speaking Mossi, the young people received good jobs. This desertion to the administration has become so serious that the missionaries at Manga have ceased to teach French to their catechists and now use the vernacular.

Conversion to Catholicism, bringing with it the knowledge of French, was formerly one of the sure roads to upward social mobility. Most Catholic teachers at Manga (and at Nobéré) are individuals who were recruited as unwilling school-boys but today are the highest paid members of their lineages. Other gains have accrued to persons who become Catholics. For example, the people at Manga believe that the missionaries used their influence with the